

## **Evolution of NAVSEA**

The current organization of the Department of the Navy is the result of an evolutionary process. Since the Naval Sea Systems Command is a product of this process, a [sketch](#) of the major steps in the evolution is appropriate.

In 1789, the Secretary of War was directed to perform all duties relating to “the land and naval forces, ships, or warlike stores of the United States, or to such other matters respecting the military or naval affairs...” This arrangement prevailed until 1798, when Congress established the Department of the Navy, a simple structure in which the Secretary of the Navy exercised direct control over both the Shore Establishment and the Operating Forces.

However, a growing Navy and increased naval activity soon demonstrated the need for professional assistants to the Secretary. In response to this need, the Board of Naval Commissioners, a military body consisting of three sea-officers of the rank of Captain, then the highest rank in the Navy, was created. These Commissioners acted as professional advisors and assistants to the Secretary, principally in the field of logistics, as it is now known. The significance of the Board was that it marked the beginning of the concept that professional military assistance was necessary to enable the Secretary to provide support for the Fleet, and that responsibility for these matters could be separated from responsibility for the operation of the Fleet at sea.

The Board was abolished in 1842 when Congress created the Bureau System, which brought into being the five original bureaus, one of which was the Bureau of Construction Equipment and Repair and the Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography. The purpose of this new system was to improve the procurement and distribution of materials, to provide technical assistance to the Fleet and the Shore Activities, and to overcome the shortcomings that had previously existed. In 1862, the number of bureaus was expanded from five to eight. The names of the early bureaus forming the roots of the Naval Sea Systems Command were the Bureau of Ordnance, the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, the Bureau of Construction and Repair, and the Bureau of Steam Engineering.

Subsequently, the Bureau of Equipment and Recruitings name was changed in 1889 to the Bureau of Equipment. In 1914, the Bureau of Equipment was disestablished and its functions transferred to the Bureau of Steam Engineering. In 1920, the name of Bureau of Steam Engineering was changed to the Bureau of Engineering and was combined in 1941 with the Bureau of Construction and Repair to form the Bureau of Ships. While this evolution was taking place on the shipside of the tree, there were no changes on the ordnance side. However, in January 1959, a Committee on Organization of the Department of the Navy, better known as the Franke Board, concluded that the Bureau of Aeronautics and the Bureau of Ordnance should be merged, and on 1 December 1959, the bureau of Naval Weapons was established.

The Material Bureau concept continued until 1 May 1966, when four Bureaus were disestablished and six Systems Commands established. One systems command was the Naval Ordnance Systems Command, another the Naval Ship Systems Command. These two Commands were the forerunner organizations to the Naval Sea Systems Command, which was established on 1 July 1974.